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SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE TO BELARUS DRAFT RESOLUTION

REF: STATE 41971

Poloffs delivered reftel demarche to Francois Vandeville, responsible for human rights in the MFA's United Nations and International Organizations bureau, and Pierre Cochard, DAS-equivalent for Russia and the former Soviet space, on March 10. In a March 15 conversation, Vandeville characterized the draft text as "good" and "strong." He said that Luxembourg, in its EU Presidency position, would consolidate all EU remarks, but noted that France would recommend adding colleges and universities to the list of entities against which harassment must cease in section 2(d).

France is also in favor of including a point against the arbitrary detention of political prisoners. Finally, Vandeville questioned the first sentence in paragraph 4. As the appointment of a Special Rapporteur was decided last year, the language, to his reading, seemed to indicate that the U.S. was requesting some type of change. If this is not the case, he recommends substituting "extend the mandate" for "re-appoint."

Leach